

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 0420

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS1

TAGS: PFOR, MA, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH-MALAGASY RELATIONS

REF: TANANARIVE 0353

BEGIN SUMMARY: I SUGGESTED TO NEW FRENCH AMBASSADOR IT IN INTEREST OF BOTH FRANCE AND U.S. TO BACK GENERAL ANDRIAMAHAZO AS FRIEND OF WEST WITH AID. HE AGREED WITH THIS VIEW, AND SAID RATSIRAKA HAS MADE PLAY TO SHOW HE ALSO CAN BE FRIENDLY TOWARD FRANCE. END SUMMARY.

1. I TOOK ADVANTAGE OF INITIAL CALL OF NEW FRENCH AMBASSADOR ROGER MAR 13 TO STATE THAT I CONSIDER GENERAL ANDRIAMAHAZO, PRESIDENT OF MALAGASY MILITARY DIRECTORY, AS GENUINE FRIEND OF WEST (INCLUDING BOTH FRANCE AND U.S.) AND BEST POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT LEADER WE BOTH COULD EXPECT IN MADAGASCAR. I SAID I THEREFORE URGING WASHINGTON TO ADOPT AS FAVORABLE AND RESPONSIVE ATTITUDE AS POSSIBLE TO NEW GOMR'S INTEREST IN AID. I SUGGESTED SIMILAR STANCE, PARTICULARLY IN FIELD OF BILATERAL CAPITAL AID, WOULD SERVE FRENCH INTERESTS, AND NOTED THAT FRANCE HAD TRADITIONALLY BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY CONFIDENTIAL

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MORE IMPORTANT DONOR TO MADAGASCAR THAN U.S.

2. ROGER CONCURRED IN THIS ASSESSMENT OF ANDRIAMAHAZO, AND INDICATED HE BELIEVED FRENCH GOVERNMENT WOULD BE RESPONSIVE TO MALAGASY REQUESTS. HE SAID IT IMPORTANT, ESPECIALLY FOR FRANCE, TO AVOID DISPLAYING EXCESSIVE PUBLIC EMBRACE OF ANDRIAMAHAZO AS THAT COULD BOOMERANG AGAINST LATTER.

3. ROGER ANTICIPATES HIS RELATIONS WITH GOMR WILL BE CONSIDERABLY EASIER THAN THOSE OF HIS PREDECESSOR. HE POINTED OUT THAT, IN CONTRAST TO LATTER'S COLONIAL SERVICE BACKGROUND, HE (ROGER) HAS HAD PURELY DIPLOMATIC CAREER. (WITHOUT SO STATING, ROGER WAS ALSO IMPLYING THAT, CONTRARY TO HIS PREDECESSOR, HE HAD NO LINKS WITH FOCCART AND LATTER'S ORGANIZATION IN EX-FRENCH CONTROLLED TERRITORIES IN AFRICA.) ROGER BELIEVES RANKING MALAGASY OFFICIALS HAVE READILY SEIZED IMPLICATIONS OF THIS

DIFFERENCE IN BACKGROUND BETWEEN HIM AND PREDECESSOR.

4. ROGER TOLD ME THAT, INTERESTINGLY, COMMANDER DIDIER RATSIRAKA HAD TAKEN CONSIDERABLE PAINS IN SEEK MEETING WITH HIM SHORTLY AFTER HE PRESENTED CREDENTIALS, EVEN THOUGH RATSIRAKA HOLDS NO MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIO. RATSIRAKA EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN INVITED TO BE AMONG SEVERAL MEMBERS OF MILITARY DIRECTORY WHO ACCOMPANIED ANDRIAMAHAZO WHEN HE RECEIVED ROGER'S CREDENTIALS. ROGER SAID TO ME THAT THRUST OF MEETING WAS TO SHOW THAT RATSIRAKA COULD BE FRIENDLY TOWARD FRANCE. O COMMENTED THAT I CONSIDER

RATSIRAKA AS A MAN WITHOUT IDEOLOGY (EITHER EASTERN OR WESTERN) WHO IS INTELLIGENT, ABLE, AND POLITICALLY AMBITIOUS. I ADDED THAT, PROBABLY DISAPPOINTED WITH MEAGER AID RESULTS (EXCEPT FROM PRC IN 1972 AND 1973) OF HIS EFFORTS CULTIVATE COMMUNIST AND ARAB COUNTRIES, RATSIRAKA MAY NOW BE TURNING TO TEST FRANCE.
MENDENHALL

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